

6. LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

Enfield first adopted a Plan of Development in 1965. The Planning and Zoning Commission has subsequently updated the plan in 1979 and 1987. A review of these documents reveals certain consistent themes that have shaped local land use planning.

Neighborhood conservation and revitalization of older neighborhoods has been a goal of the Enfield Plan since 1965. Plans have regularly stressed the community's desire to reverse deterioration of built-up areas such as Thompsonville, North Thompsonville and Hazardville and at the same time protect newer neighborhoods from infringement of undesired commercial uses, inappropriate residential densities and intrusive traffic.

As each plan update has been initiated there has been renewed community request to slow the pace of development and reduce the density of new residential construction.

While there has been consistent concern to prevent retail expansion into residential areas, the regional shopping district has been recognized as an important component of the local economic base. There has also been regular community interest in expanding the economic base by increasing opportunities for industrial development. In the 1979 update, for example, it was recommended to increase industrially zoned land from 15% to 27% of the Town acreage, which was accomplished.

Another consistent issue of concern running through Enfield's planning history has been the desire to protect key natural resources such as the Connecticut River, Freshwater Brook, Scantic River, the Buckhorn wetlands and the "Ridge" east of Broad Brook Road along the Somers Town line. As the pace of development has continued to steadily convert vacant lands to house lots and industrial sites, the concern for open space preservation has gained increased importance. Added to this concern for natural features, more recently, has been a desire to preserve agricultural lands as an important part of Enfield's aesthetic and economic character.

Progress has been made on many of these issues. Thompsonville revitalization is now on-going with certain improvements made by the public sector and other activities carried forward privately. Residential densities have been reduced in new development with the general "upzoning" in 1988 that increased minimum lot sizes in many undeveloped areas. Industrial expansion has occurred with major corporations now having facilities in Enfield. Open Space and farmland preservation has moved forward. The Connecticut Department of Environment Protection has developed a park plan for the Scantic River and acquired major acreage along its banks. The State has also acquired 775 acres of "development rights" on many farms in the southeast quadrant of Enfield. Enfield's land use development regulations have been regularly upgraded through the years to implement site specific planning requirements for wetlands conservation, open space set-asides, traffic management, stormwater controls and flood protection.

1999 LAND USE PLAN

The 1999 Land Use Plan makes no dramatic departures from the themes which have guided Enfield's development over the past 30 years. The basic concept is neighborhood conservation and suburban expansion in the lands between the Connecticut River and the Scantic River and predominately rural character land use south and east of the Scantic River. Particular attention is given to conservation/revitalization strategies for the Thompsonville, Enfield Street and Hazardville neighborhoods. Specific recommendations are made for potential open space acquisitions. Within the development zone there is also some specific discussion of conservation and resource management, housing and industrial development. The Land Use Plan Map which follows this page illustrates the future generalized land use pattern of the Town.

Goal: Provide for the Direction and Timing of Growth in an Orderly Fashion to Accomplish a Balance of Residential Commercial and Industrial Land Uses While Preserving the Town's Important Natural and Cultural Resources.

Maturing of the development pattern along Elm Street between the retail mall development and the industrially zoned area to the east (I-91 to the vicinity of Elm/Shaker intersection) has left small pockets of residential uses in this high traffic commercial corridor. On the south side of Elm Street, residential frontage properties are surrounded by commercial and institutional uses. The quality of residential life has been degraded in this area and long term prospects are for deterioration of the properties. Encouraging conversions to non-residential use is now appropriate.

Resolving the land use conflicts on the north side of Elm Street is more complex. Elm Street frontage properties are similarly impacted by the traffic volumes and commercial activity as south side properties. However, a large residential neighborhood exists to the north which gains access from Elm Street. The frontage properties effectively buffer this neighborhood from the adverse impacts of the commercial corridor. Changes to the permitted land use should retain the residential appearance of the structures and minimize site disturbance to abutting residential properties. Consideration of crafting a transitional zone which encourages destination uses such as professional offices or service establishments should be undertaken.

CONSERVATION

The desire to protect Enfield's outstanding natural resources has been a constant theme of past Town Plans and is continued in this 1999 Update. Enfield's watercourses and related water resources are among the most prominent conservation concerns.

The principal river through Enfield is the Connecticut River, which forms the Town's western boundary with Suffield. Several other watercourses also flow through Town, including the Scantic

LONGMEADOW, MASS.

SUFFIELD

CONNECTICUT

SOMERS

ELLINGTON

EAST WINDSOR

LEGEND

- Open Space
- Low Density, Residential & Farmland
- Suburban Residential
- Village Center & Historic Preservation
- Retail, Commercial & Service
- Industrial, Office, Business Park & Existing Prison
- Mixed Use

Town Facility

Existing Open Space

Watercourse

Land Use Plan

Planning and Zoning Commission
Town of Enfield, Connecticut

Plan of Conservation
and Development



HARRALL - MICHALOWSKI
ASSOCIATES, Incorporated
Hamden, Connecticut

April 1999

SOURCE OF BASE MAP:
TOWN OF ENFIELD TAX MAPS AS DIGITIZED BY
HARRALL - MICHALOWSKI ASSOCIATES, INC.
AND DICESARE - BENTLEY ENGINEERS, INC.

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River, Freshwater Brook, Waterworks Brook, Grape Brook, Boweys Brook, Fairbank Brook, Terry Brook and Buckhorn Brook. In addition to the watercourses, there are several ponds, Freshwater Pond, Cranberry Pond, Shaker Pond, Crescent Lake, Stowes Pond and Powder Mill Pond. These waterbodies are important to the drainage of the community and to its character and appearance.

Along the local waterways there are sections subject to flooding in 100 or 500 year storms. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has mapped these areas and protection of public safety dictates special restrictions on development be applied within flood hazard zones. Watercourse and floodplains are identified on the Natural Resources Map to point out the location of these important natural resources for consideration in future land use planning as well as stormwater management.

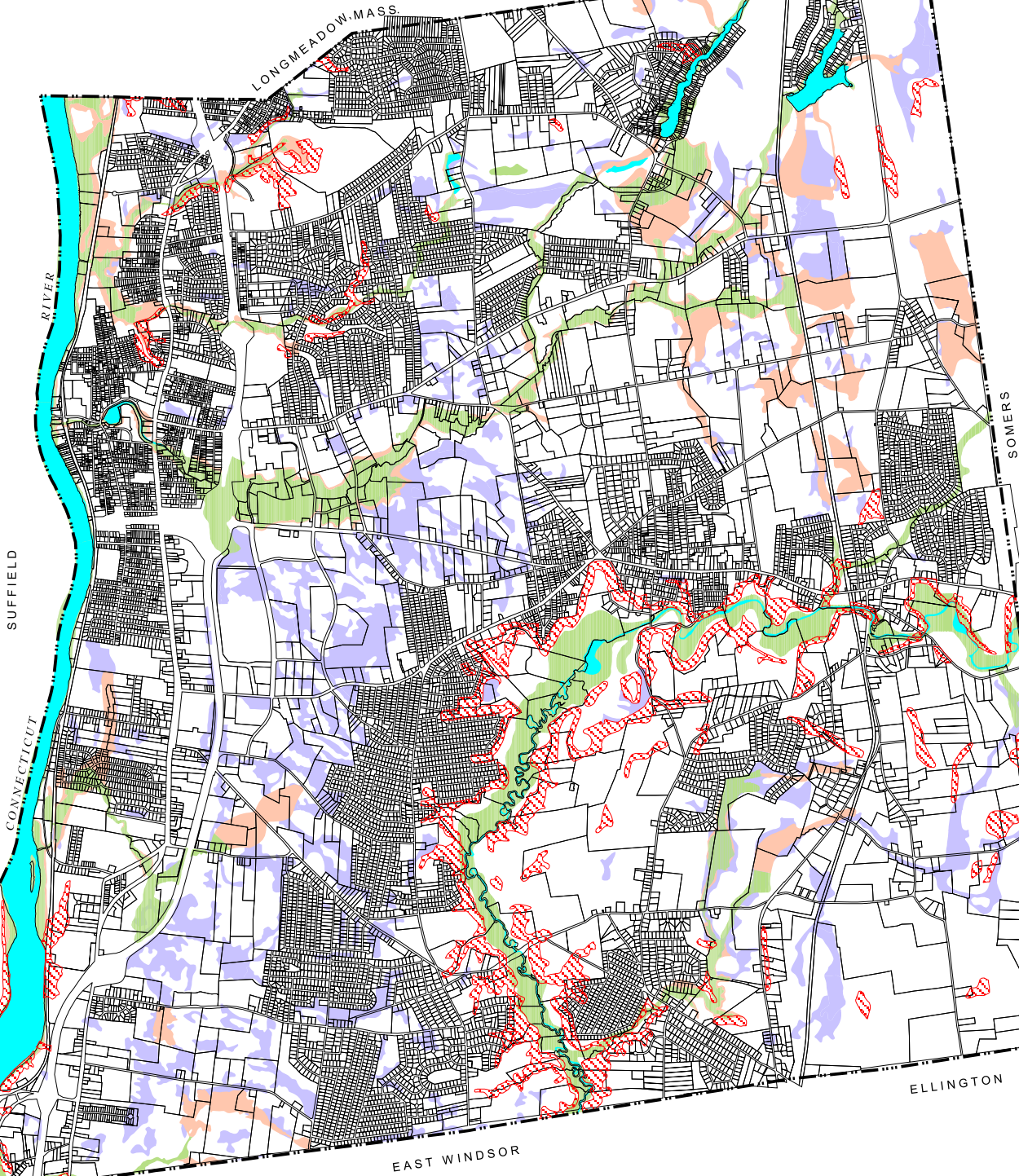
Another significant water related natural resource are Enfield's wetlands. Inland wetlands are defined by the State of Connecticut as soils characterized as poorly drained, very poorly drained, alluvial and floodplain. Wetlands serve a variety of functions which make them valuable components of the community. They serve as an important function in their capacity to control flooding, by acting as "sponges" as precipitation is absorbed by the wetland, thereby reducing runoff into streams and river channels and decreasing the potential flood hazard downstream.

Wetlands can also improve water quality by absorbing contaminants and removing them from the water. Wetlands vegetation can remove nutrients and other contaminants through the root system. In their natural state wetlands can also be important to a community as open space and they provide significant natural habitat for wildlife.

The "Natural Resources" map illustrates the location of wetland soils and flood plains in Enfield. In addition to the watercourses and watersheds it is noteworthy that there are extensive wetland areas distributed throughout Enfield which are not tied to such waterways. A broad belt of wetlands sweeps from the southwest corner of town to the northeast corner. Another wetlands system is located in the southeast corner, away from, but tending to drain to Buckhorn Brook.

An aquifer is a set of geologic conditions which allows for the withdrawal of water from the ground in useable quantities. In Connecticut there are two types of aquifers - bedrock aquifers and stratified drift aquifers. All of Enfield's local water supply is provided from wells that draw supply from the underlying aquifer. The aquifers and principal wells in Enfield are displayed on the "Level B Aquifers" map.

The quality of groundwater is affected by land use and activity on the land above the aquifer. A pollutant will tend to move with the natural flow of the groundwater through the underlying soil and bedrock. In time and over distance, pollutants will tend to decrease in concentration as a result of dilution, decay, absorption and death of bacteria.



LEGEND

- 100 Year Flood Plain
- 500 Year Flood Plain
- Wetland
- Slope Greater Than 15 Percent
- Watercourse

Natural Resources

Planning and Zoning Commission
Town of Enfield, Connecticut

Plan of Conservation
and Development



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Hamden, Connecticut

May 1998



LEGEND

- Well
- ▨ Level B Aquifer
- ▧ Water

Level B Aquifers

Planning and Zoning Commission
Town of Enfield, Connecticut

Plan of Conservation
and Development



HARRALL - MICHALOWSKI
ASSOCIATES, Incorporated
Hartford, Connecticut January 1998

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The sources of groundwater pollution are varied. Sanitary landfills, road salt storage and application, leaks and spills of petroleum products or other chemicals, industrial or commercial waste disposal, septic systems, land disposal of septage and sewage sludge are all potential sources of groundwater pollution.

The importance of aquifers to water supply and the potential pollution from surface activity have led Connecticut to require land use restrictions above aquifers in addition to traditional zoning with the objective of preventing pollution.

The concern for conservation of these natural resources has been incorporated into the recommendations of the Land Use Plan by resource identification and by land use designation as proposed open space. But this is not the limit of the intended conservation program.

Conservation efforts are applied regularly in the land use management process. The Town of Enfield has adopted floodplain management, stream channel encroachment, erosion and sedimentation, open space set-aside in subdivision and aquifer protection. Continuation and upgrading of local regulatory practice consistent with current state enabling legislation is an intended objective of the Land Use Plan.

Conservation goals extend beyond the Town's watercourses. There is concern locally to preserve the Town's farmlands as economic and aesthetic resources important to the Town's character and image. There is also concern for conservation of historic neighborhoods which provide some architectural character to built-up areas of the community. While the concern for conservation has been incorporated in a general way into the Land Use Plan, specific conservation topics and recommendations are included within other chapters of this Plan. Open space and recreation includes several conservation proposals as does community facilities and special neighborhood studies of Thompsonville, Enfield Street and Hazardville.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Strategy

Enfield has a long-standing goal to promote phased quality development of economic benefit to the Town. As noted in the introduction to the land use section, the regional shopping district has been recognized as an important contributor to the Enfield economic base. Expanded industrial development has also been recognized as desirable for a balanced economy and strong tax base. Additionally, the "micro-economics" of particular neighborhoods such as Thompsonville, North Thompsonville and Hazardville have been the subject of revitalization efforts and special neighborhood strategies prepared as part of this plan update.

Moving forward economic development will focus on retention and enhancement of existing companies and facilities with an investment in infrastructure to improve the marketability of available vacant commercial and industrial acreage.

The greatest areas of vacant industrial acreage are in the southwest and northeast corners of Enfield. In the northeast, marketability is impaired by the distance from I-91 and accessibility over roadways such as Elm Street and Hazard Avenue. A recommendation to alleviate this situation and enhance the access and marketability of the northeast corner is new connector road construction between Hazard Avenue and Moody Road.

In the southwest corner of Enfield, where substantial acreage is available for industrial development access to interior portions of these sites is limited. A recommendation contained in previous Plans of Development was to improve access to these lands for development by the extension of two roadways, Freshwater Boulevard and Phoenix Avenue. These long standing recommendations received considerable discussion during the Plan update process. It was concluded that these proposed roadways be deleted from the Town Plan because of the extent of wetlands in the area and the difficulty of mitigating adverse impacts.

Also, in the southeast corner there are a few locations where consideration might be given to some zoning district revisions. There is the Depot Hill Area which is a mix of R-33 and I-2 zoning which is close to an I-91 interchange and overlooks the Connecticut River. The combination of access and amenity available here suggests untapped development potential.

The Economic Development Areas and Initiatives Map which follows, illustrates areas and projects on which to concentrate over the next ten year plan period.

Based upon a review of the economic trends occurring in Enfield and its region, the current status of non-residential development in the Town as well as public input from surveys and neighborhood meetings, the following objectives and recommendations are proposed to guide economic development over the next decade:

Goal: Promote phased, quality development of economic benefit to the Town.

Objective:

Improve the road infrastructure providing access to industrial areas in order to improve access, promote subdivision and buffer residential areas.


LONGMEADOW, MASS.

SUFFIELD
CONNECTICUT








SOMERS

ELLINGTON

NDSOR

Moody Road
ExtensionDepot Hill
Rezone/RedevelopmentLEGEND Principal Economic Development Area

Existing Land Use

-  Auto Sales/Service
-  Manufacturing
-  Mixed Commercial/Residential
-  Office
-  Other Commercial
-  Professional/Financial Services
-  Retail/Sales Service
- Wholesale/Distribution/Heavy Commercial

Economic Development Areas & Initiatives

Planning and Zoning Commission
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Recommendations:

1. Develop a connector road between Hazard Avenue and Moody Road to provide alternate access to the northeast industrial area.

Objective:

Use zoning and subdivision regulations to encourage attractive and innovative commercial and industrial developments.

Recommendations:

1. The Depot Hill area has economic development potential because of nearby I-91 access and the amenity value of proximity to the Connecticut River. Undertake a comprehensive study to explore the area potential and make recommendations for rezoning and possible redevelopment in the area. Consider expansion of the existing I-2 zone.
2. Review, update and enhance current zoning regulation performance standards concerning high quality design in commercial and industrial projects. A component of this review should include comparison with competitive Town's performance standards to gauge comparability of subdivision regulations and standards.
3. Consider revising the zoning regulations and districts to encourage the adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized commercial properties for new forms of retail, business services, light industrial, or distribution type uses.
4. Confine commercial development to existing central core areas and restrict scattering commercial strip development throughout the Town. Consideration for traffic impacts and neighborhood convenience should be part of the evaluation process for commercial districts.
5. Some existing commercial and industrial development is interspersed with wetlands. Consider establishment of a program such as wetlands mitigation fund to preserve or expand high quality wetlands in exchange for allowing encroachment into degraded wetlands for industrial expansion of significance to the Town. This is considered a high priority item by the Economic Development Commission.
6. Review the zoning regulations governing home occupations with special consideration to amendments which revise the definitions to acknowledge the changing nature of the types of home occupations possible given new business opportunities and communications technologies, allowing increased opportunities for self-employment at home while maintaining the character of residential neighborhoods.

Objective:

Improve market awareness of Enfield's economic development opportunities and promote expanded economic development planning.

Recommendations

1. Continue the prudent use of tax assessment agreements to encourage the location of new firms or the expansion of existing firms in Enfield.
2. Consider expanding the use of Enfield's Home Page on the Internet to promote the Town as a desirable location, to communicate business opportunities in Enfield, and to provide other appropriate information about economic development in Enfield.
3. Become actively involved in regional economic planning and development activities and consider creating an economic alliance with adjoining communities to ensure complementary development strategies. Special attention to development along I-91 corridor and complementary municipal development goals are important here.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Recent Trends

At the start of 1997, the Town of Enfield had a housing inventory of about 16,853 units. This was an increase over the preceding ten years of about 1,830 units. The volume of new housing development has varied widely over the ten years since the Town's Plan was last updated. In 1987 and 1988 there was an increase in the housing inventory by 677 and 515 units respectively. Those increases included major new construction and rehab activities.

Construction dropped sharply to 215 units in 1989 and only 90 units in 1990 and since 1990 new construction has been about 50 units annually, all in the single family category.

The profile of the local housing inventory is predominately single family detached homes, but includes a much broader variety of styles and densities. About 30% of the local inventory consists of units which are not single family homes on individual lots. These other types of housing include attached one family units; two family dwellings; multi-family units (3-4 family); apartment units (5 units and more) and mobile homes. The overall inventory at the start of 1997 is shown on the following page.

Table 13
Enfield Housing Inventory

1 Family Detached	11,791
1 Family Attached	897
2 Family	1,194
3-4 Family	1,089
5+ Units	1,717
Mobile Homes	8
Undetermined	157
Total	16,853 Units

Source: CT Department of Community and Economic Development - Annual Housing Report

Housing Diversity and Affordability

While most recent new construction has been single family detached homes, the total inventory includes about 30% which are other types of units. The Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Enfield includes provisions for a variety of housing density and styles intended to provide diverse opportunities for development.

New single family detached homes can be developed on individual lots ranging from 33,000 square feet to 88,000 square feet in a traditional subdivision. In an "open space subdivision" lot sizes are reduced to 25,000 and 44,000 square feet. Additionally, "Planned Residential Development" regulations permit duplex and multiple dwelling unit buildings on sites of 5 acres or larger. There are also some districts such as Thompsonville, where infill housing is possible on smaller lots. The "Special Development District" fosters conversion of buildings, such as the former Bigelow Carpet Mill, to housing. Thus Town zoning regulations offer flexible and diverse regulatory opportunity for housing development.

Besides providing a wide range of housing types, it has been a goal of the Town of Enfield to enable people of all income levels and housing needs to live in Enfield. The Town has pursued this goal through participation in the many state and federal programs aimed at encouraging and supporting affordable housing and diverse community development.

The result of this effort has been a sub-category of "assisted" housing which the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development tabulated as 11.43% of the local inventory

a the end of 1994. The DECD annual report on affordable housing listed the Enfield units which qualified as follows:

Table 14
Enfield Assisted Housing Inventory

CHFA Mortgage	672
Deed Restricted	7
Elderly Assisted	377
Family Assisted	859
Total Assisted Units	1,914

It should be noted that while the affordable inventory was 11.43% of the 1994 inventory, as the inventory grows the same number of assisted units becomes a small percentage. Also, since a large proportion of the assisted units were CHFA mortgages, these could drop from this special category if they are purchased by a buyer who chooses not use CHFA funding. Should the Enfield sub-category of assisted housing drop below 1,685 units (based on the beginning 1997 inventory) then the special land use appeal process for affordable housing would be activated for new affordable housing proposals.

In fact, regardless of the statutory encouragements to foster affordability, Enfield has a market position as a generally affordable community when compared to towns in the Hartford region.

A report prepared by the Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) in 1996 indicated Enfield's median home sales price to be among the most affordable in the region. That report tabulated the "Affordable Sales Price" by income of household to evaluate whether the local sales prices would likely be affordable to households that would be considered low or very low income. The 1996 sales price limits calculated by CRCOG, were \$202,497 for a household of median income; \$151,509 for a low income household; and \$101,249 for a very low income household. In Enfield, with an all sales price median of \$115,000 was 25% below the limit for low income households. In addition, at least half the condominium sales (median price \$99,000) were below the affordability ceiling for very low income households. Therefore, Enfield merits its market position as an affordable community under regional standards.

Housing Development Strategy

The following goals and objectives for housing are presented:

Goal: Continue to provide a wide range of housing types to enable people of all income levels and housing needs to live in Enfield.

Recommendations:

1. Review and update Planned Residential Development options under Zoning Ordinance and evaluate definition and distribution of “dwelling unit equivalents”.
2. Continue Town participation in housing assistance and community development programs funded by United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development.

Goal: Continue to maintain and enhance Town’s residential character through preservation and revitalization of historic neighborhoods and enhancement and protection of more recently developed neighborhoods.

Recommendations:

1. Limit the expansion of commercial uses to established commercial and industrial districts permitting such activities.
2. Maintain area southeast of the Scantic River as a low density single family detached home neighborhood.
3. Continue to provide adequate street maintenance and public services to established neighborhoods and adequate public facilities to meet their needs.